Grace Episcopal Church
Scripture 202 – Introduction to the Bible
Session 7: Wednesday, October 19, 2011
Some other Judges

Othnial

The first judge mentioned after the death of Joshua is Othniel, and he is dispatched rapidly in three verses (3:9–11*). He is said to go to war against Aram-naharaim (Syria between the Tigris and Euphrates) but this is probably a scribal mistake. Aram does not appear again in the book of Judges. We are not told what tribes supported Othniel, but he was impelled by "the spirit of the Lord." The only apparent effect of the spirit here is that he was successful in battle. After this, the land had rest for the stereotypical forty years.[1]

By : **Emil G. Hirsch Ira Maurice Price**
One of the sons of Kenaz, according to the chronicler (I Chron. iv. 13); hence one of the Kenizzites. After Caleb had been assigned his possession (Josh. XV. 13 *et seq.*), he drove out the giants and otherwise secured it for himself, except the town of Kirjath-sepher, as a prize for whose capture he offered his daughter Achsah. "Othniel the son of Kenez, the brother of Caleb, took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife" (*ib.* xv. 16, 17). Othniel's heroism, however, achieved the greatest results for his people when he delivered them from foreign oppression. The tribes had no sooner settled in the land than a conqueror from the country of Mesopotamia, Cushan-rishathaim, probably an Aramean, swept down over Syrian territory and subjected Israel. For eight years they were compelled to pay the price of submission and oppression. When they cried for mercy Yhwh raised up

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[9] But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the Israelites, who delivered them, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

[10] The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the Lord gave King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

[11] So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Judges 3:9–11 (NRSV)

[1]Dick, M. B. 1988. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible : An inductive reading of the Old Testament* . Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

a savior, "even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother" (Judges iii. 9). By the spirit of Yhwh that came upon him he routed the king from Mesopotamia and saved Israel from its oppressor. "And the land had rest forty years." The question of marriage involved in this narrative is not troublesome. The marrying of near kin was allowable in that day, as is seen in the cases of Abraham (Gen. XX. 2, 5, 12), of Isaac and Rebekah, of Jacob and Rachel and Leah, and often in later times. Othniel's real relation to Caleb is plain if the narrative is allowed to tell its own story.E

Othniel

Meaning: lion of God; God is might

There were two biblical men by this name:

1. the first of the judges (**Joshua 15:17-18**)

> "He is the only judge mentioned connected with the **tribe of Judah**. Under him the land had rest forty years.
>
> He was the son of **Kenaz**, younger brother of Caleb (**Judg. 3:8,9-11**). His wife **Achsah** was the daughter of **Caleb** (**Josh. 15:16,17**; **Judg. 1:13**). He gained her hand as a reward for his **bravery** in leading a successful expedition against **Debir** (q.v.).
>
> Some thirty years after the death of **Joshua**, the Israelites fell under the subjection of **Chushan-rishathaim** (q.v.), the king of **Mesopotamia**. He oppressed them for full eight years, when they "cried" unto **Jehovah**, and Othniel was raised up to be their deliverer" (Matthew G. Easton / Edited by Paul S. Taylor).

"The Spirit of the Lord came upon Him" (**Judges 3:10**).

2. **Heldai's** ancestor (**1 Chronicles 27:15**) - nothing else is known of him

Author: Paul S. Taylor

Enud

The second judge, Ehud, is also dealt with briefly, but he is credited with one of the more colorful exploits in the book. His daring assassination of King Eglon of Moab is described in vivid detail. Ehud is a Benjaminite, from the region near Jericho. The Moabites, the people immediately across the Dead Sea, had defeated “Israel” and taken possession of Jericho. It is doubtful that “Israel” here refers to anything more than the tribe of Benjamin, the people of the immediate locality. The assassination of the Moabite king is accomplished by deception, but this kind of deceit is the standard fare of guerrilla warfare and insurgency in all times and places. In this case, Moab is clearly the oppressor, and Ehud is a freedom fighter, or rebel leader. The worship of foreign gods, or the observance of the covenant, is not at issue in the story.[2]

In the story of Ehud we have a brave and cunning warrior who tricks the enemy and we read all the gory details. We might be repulsed by his actions, but to the Israelite audience this would have been comical and inspirational. Ehud is another example of a brave warrior who trusts God (cf. 3:28) and defeats one of the enemies of the nation.
http://www.bible.org

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covenant A solemn agreement. Used especially of agreements between God and Israel.

[2]Dick, M. B. 1988. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible : An inductive reading of the Old Testament* . Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Deborah

Deception is also a factor in the killing of Sisera, the Canaanite general, in Judges 4. In this case, the situation is more complicated. Judges 4 is the prose counterpart of the Song of Deborah in Judges 5. It may be that the prose account was extrapolated from the poetry in an attempt to fill out the story (cf. the relationship between Exodus 14 and 15). Shamgar, son of Anath, who is mentioned in Judg 5:6*, is said in 3:31* to have killed six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. The Philistines do not appear in Judges 5. According to Judges 4, the Lord delivered Israel into the hand of King Jabin of Hazor. One might assume, then, that Jabin was the oppressor. The song in chapter 5, however, gives a different impression, as it boasts that the Israelites were successfully plundering the caravan routes. If this was the case, then the battle that ensued was not a war of liberation for Israel, but simply a clash between two groups that had competing economic interests.

Two other features of the account in chapter 4 are noteworthy. First, Deborah, who is described as a prophetess but who acts as a judge in the usual sense of the term, accompanies the warrior judge Barak into battle. (She is not said to fight.) She forewarns Barak that the campaign will not end in his glory, "for the Lord will give Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Judg 4:9*). The woman in question, however, is not Deborah, but Jael, the wife of a Kenite. Since the Kenites were not an Israelite tribe (they are identified in Judg 4:11* as "the descendants of Hobab, the

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[6] "In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, caravans ceasedand travelers kept to the byways.

Judges 5:6 (NRSV)

[31] After him came Shamgar son of Anath, who killed six hundred of the Philistines with an oxgoad. He too delivered Israel.

Judges 3:31 (NRSV)

[9] And she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Judges 4:9 (NRSV)

[11] Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the other Kenites, that is, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had encamped as far away as Elon-bezaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

father-in-law of Moses"), Jael is a marginal figure on two accounts—she is a woman and not an Israelite. Yet she becomes the heroine of the battle by luring Sisera into her tent and killing him with a tent peg while he is asleep. (The poetic account in Judg 5:26* gives the impression that she struck him with a heavy object, which is variously described as a mallet or a tent peg, in poetic parallelism. The prose account clarifies the act by having her hammer the tent peg through his temple.) For this she is pronounced "most blessed of women" in 5:24*. The morality of her action, however, is problematic on several counts. Her clan was at peace with the Canaanites, so she was not trying to liberate it. She simply seems to have decided to back the winners in the battle. Moreover, the violation of a guest was regarded as a particularly heinous crime in the ancient world. (Compare the story of Sodom in Gen 19:8*, where Lot's host offers his virgin daughters to the mob so that they will not molest the men, "for they have come under the shelter of my roof.") Since Jael's opportunism works to the benefit of Israel, however, no questions are raised about its morality. As in some stories in Genesis, the end (the benefit of Israel) justifies even dastardly means.[3]

Judges 4:11 (NRSV)

[26] She put her hand to the tent pegand her right hand to the workmen's mallet; she struck Sisera a blow, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple.

Judges 5:26 (NRSV)

[24] "Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed.

Judges 5:24 (NRSV)

[8] Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof."

Genesis 19:8 (NRSV)